

New York Times, 3 August 1981

## Shift Is Seen in U.S. Policy on Third World

Special to The New York Times

CANCUN, Mexico, Aug. 2 — Leading industrialized and developing nations agreed today to discuss their longstanding differences at a summit conference here in late October.

There were also signs that the Reagan Administration may be softening its stance toward the negotiation of so-called North-South issues in a global round of talks later at the United Nations.

At the end of a two-day preparatory meeting here attended by foreign ministers from eight industrialized and 14 developing countries, the United States for the first time appeared to accept the idea of talks at the United Nations on a broad range of economic problems affecting the third world.

Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr. reportedly indicated in a closed-door session that, while the Reagan Administration gave priority to strengthening the United States economy, it was "impossible" to await a United States economic recovery before addressing questions of international cooperation.

### 'A Result of Shared Commitment'

In a statement at the airport before returning to Washington this afternoon, Mr. Haig again stressed the importance of domestic economic policies and urged a strengthening of the world economy "as a result of shared commitment and acceptance of shared responsibility for mutual benefit."

"The spirit in which these discussions took place I feel was unusually constructive," he said. "I believe all of us recognize that we have a historic opportunity in Cancun to make a new beginning to relations among our nations."

"This new beginning would reject the North versus South confrontation and instead examine what we can do to make the world better for all of us and to address the particularly pressing problems faced by a number of the developing nations."

Although President Reagan accepted the invitation of President José López Portillo of Mexico last June to attend the

Continued on Page A6, Column 1

New York Times, 3 August 1981 (Continued)

## Reagan Seems to Alter Policy Toward Talks on Third World

Continued From Page A1

meeting planned at this Caribbean resort on Oct. 22 and 23, his Administration had until now shown little enthusiasm for the concept of major economic reforms to benefit poor nations.

The United States, apparently eager that the Cancún meeting not become a negotiating forum, insisted successfully at this weekend's procedural discussions that the heads of state should meet without a formal agenda, prepared position papers or a final communiqué. Many foreign ministers and diplomats here said nevertheless that Mr. Haig had adopted a generally conciliatory posture in private conversations.

"I believe that there has been a real change in U.S. attitudes in the past month," Mark MacGuigan, Canada's External Affairs Minister, said today. "The change in the American position is its acceptance of the process of global negotiations. It is hedged, but it is an acceptance."

Mr. MacGuigan said that many developing nations had been favorably impressed by the final communiqué issued by the seven leading industrial nations after their meeting in Ottawa last month. The communiqué dealt extensively with the problems of the developing world and expressed willingness to tackle perennial issues afresh.

Several industrialized nations have been urging Washington to adopt a more flexible approach to the third-world issue. "In Ottawa, the U.S. understood better why their partners found certain issues important," Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson of France said today. "Countries like France, West Germany and Japan are convinced that the best possibilities for growth in the first world are to be found in the third world."

### 'Impossible to Do Nothing'

Noting that the Soviet Union had decided to boycott the Cancún summit meeting, Mr. Cheysson said that Washington risked being blamed for any failure in the October meeting. "The fact that the U.S. is willing to participate at the Presidential level means that it is

prepared to do something at Cancún," he said. "It is impossible for them to do nothing."

All leading Western industrial powers with the exception of Italy have said that they will be present at Cancún. The developing world will be represented by semi-industrialized nations like Brazil, India and Mexico and by deeply poor nations such as Tanzania, Bangladesh and Guyana. China has also agreed to attend.

Summarizing the results of the weekend's talks, Foreign Minister Jorge Castañeda of Mexico emphasized the "excellent atmosphere" of the meetings. "Despite long years of confrontation between two clearly identified groups," he said, "it was truly noteworthy that an exchange of views was possible without confrontation."

He nevertheless cautioned against excessive optimism over what could be achieved in Cancún in October. "Our objectives are modest," he said, "and it could not be otherwise with 22 leaders meeting for only two days. But we hope the summit will be a very important contribution to stimulate the global round of negotiations. It should be an important step along a new road."

### 'Global Round of Negotiations'

In a press statement issued by the ministers today, which Mr. Haig also accepted, a key phrase said that "a main objective" in October "should be to facilitate agreement with regard to the said global round of negotiations by means of achieving a real meeting of minds and positive political impetus by heads of state or government."

The so-called global round is the latest of numerous attempts by developing and industrialized nations to break their decades-old deadlock in economic negotiations.

A first North-South discussion took place in Paris in the mid-1970's but broke down without agreement after 18 months. Last year at the United Nations, the countries of North and South again failed to agree on an agenda for a global round, with industrialized nations strongly resisting the demand that the development issue be linked and negotiated in a single forum.